

In accordance with the telephone interview with the Examiner, it is believed that this Supplemental Amendment places the present application in condition for allowance.

All charges associated with this Amendment may be charged Deposit Account No. 01-0035.

All correspondence should continue to be directed to the below address.

Respectfully submitted,

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Application No. 09/663,469

APPENDIX TO AMENDMENT OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2002

CLAIM CHANGES

Amend claims 3-16 as follows:

--3. (Twice amended) Apparatus for producing packs (20) with an outer wrapper (13) made of film provided by [, in particular hinge-lid boxes for cigarettes] a film blank which is folded around the pack (10) and has [having folding] tabs which are connected to one another by thermal sealing in the region of a sealing station (25), characterized by the following features:

- a) the packs (10) are transportable [can be transported] cyclically along a straight conveying path in a plurality of [, in particular two,] pack rows (22, 23) arranged one above the other,
- b) [in] a first region of the conveying path (28, 29) comprises [is configured as] a sealing station (25) with sealing jaws (30, 31) arranged at either side of the conveying path (28, 29) for [the purpose of] sealing [the] laterally directed folding tabs, and
- c) the sealing station (25) is followed in the region of the conveying path (28, 29) by a shrinking station (26) for [the purpose of] shrinking the outer wrapper (13) through the application of heat, wherein the shrinking station (26) comprises [has movable thermal elements, in particular] heating plates (32, 33) which are movable [can be moved] against at least one side of the packs (10) for transmitting heat to the packs (10).

4. (Twice amended) Apparatus according to Claim 3, characterized in that the heating plates (32, 33) are movable [can be moved] against an upwardly directed front side of the packs (10).

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5. (Amended) Apparatus according to claim 4, characterized by the following features:
- a) during transport along a [the] horizontal conveying path (28,29), the packs (10) of a [the] top pack row (22) are [can be] conveyed in the upward direction such that the packs (10) of the top pack row (22) are [can be] conveyed over a bottom [heating element -] heating plate (33) [-] assigned to the packs (10) of a [the] bottom pack row (23),
  - b) the bottom heating plate (33) has an obliquely directed run-on surface (40) for the packs (10) of the top pack row (22),
  - c) the run-on surface (40) extends across the full [(] transverse [)] extent of the packs (10), and
  - d) the run-on surface (40) has an oblique edge (47) as a boundary.
6. (Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 5 [3], characterized in that a pack (10) of the top pack row (22) in a position before it runs onto the bottom heating plate (33) in each case is [can be] displaced in a [the] transverse direction onto a laterally arranged ramp (43), and in that, in a further conveying cycle, the pack (10) resting with one side on the ramp (43) is [can be] pushed onto the bottom heating plate (33) [, preferably] with a simultaneous sideways-directed return movement into a [the] starting position.
7. (Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 5 [3], characterized in that the [two] heating plates (32,33) are [can be] moved up and down together such that, during [the] advancement of the packs (10), the heating plates (32,33) are [can be] raised from the packs (10) a [of the] top pack row (22) and of the bottom pack row (23).

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8. (Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 7, characterized in that the heating plates (32, 33) are connected to one another by pressure-exerting elements comprising [, in particular by] lowering springs (51) and lifting springs (52) for the bottom heating plate (33), the lowering springs (51) and lifting springs (52) [preferably] being positioned such that, during an upward movement of a [the] top heating plate (32), the bottom heating plate (33) is raised by the lifting springs (52).

9. (Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 7, characterized in that a [the] top heating plate (32) is [can be moved, in particular] lowered[, ] by a transversely movable actuating mechanism with [, ] transversely movable actuating levers (53, 54) [preferably] having wedge surfaces (56) which, via supporting rollers (57) connected to the top heating plate (32), [ move, preferably] raise [, ] the top heating plate (32) counter to the loading of pressing-down elements comprising [, in particular] compression springs (49).

10. (Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 3, characterized in that the [thermal elements or] heating plates (32, 33) have heating elements (71) which have heat-transmitting elements including [, in particular] very thin metal plates (72) which react immediately to changes in temperature, the packs (10) coming into abutment against the same or [being capable of] being moved past the same at a small distance therefrom.

11. (Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 10, characterized in that the heating elements (71) have [has] sheet-like heating members comprising [elements, in particular] electrical [(resistance-)] heating wires (73) which are arranged in loops or in meandering form and, on a [the] side [which is]

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directed away from the packs (10), are connected to the metal plates (72) [or the like] via a heat-conducting intermediate layer including [, in particular] a mat (74) made of silicone.

12. (Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 10, characterized in that the heating elements (71) are [is] of multilayered construction, with heating wires (73), on the one hand, and a temperature sensor (76), on the other hand, being positioned between a plurality of mats (74, 75, 77), and the [layers, namely] metal plates (72) and mats (74, 75, 77) are [, being] connected to one another to form a unit by adhesive bonding or vulcanization.

13. (Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 12, characterized in that a [the] unit-design heating element (71) is positioned within a recess (70) of each [the] heating plate (32, 33) by way of a moldable embedding compound (79) [, in particular] made of silicone.

14. (Twice amended) Apparatus according to Claim 4, characterized by the following features:

- a) [d)] during transport along a [the] horizontal conveying path (28, 29), the packs (10) of a [the] top pack row (22) are [can be] conveyed in the upward direction such that [such] the packs (10) of the top pack row (22) are [can be] conveyed over a bottom [heating element -] heating plate (33) [-] assigned to the packs (10) of a [the] bottom pack row (23),
- b) [e)] the bottom heating plate (33) has an obliquely directed run-on surface (40) for the packs (10) of the top pack row (22),
- c) the run-on surface (40) extends across the full [(] transverse [)] extent of the packs (10), and
- d) the run-on surface (40) has an oblique edge (47) as a boundary.

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15. (Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 11, characterized in that the heating elements (71) are [is] of multilayered construction, with heating wires (73), on the one hand, and a temperature sensor (76), on the other hand, being positioned between a plurality of mats (74, 75, 77), and the [layers, namely] metal plates (72) and mats (74, 75, 77) are [, being] connected to one another to form a unit by adhesive bonding or vulcanization.

16. (Amended) Apparatus according to Claim 15, characterized in that a [the] unit-design heating element (71) is positioned within a recess (70) of each [the] heating plate (32, 33) by way of a moldable embedding compound (79) [, in particular] made of silicone.

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